

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
DISTRICT OF MASSACHUSETTS**

MASSACHUSETTS LOBSTERMEN’S  
ASSOCIATION, INC.  
8 Otis Place  
Scituate, MA 02066

Plaintiffs,

v.

GINA RAIMONDO, *in her official capacity  
as Secretary,*  
U.S. Department of Commerce  
1401 Constitution Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20230,

JANET COIT, *in her official capacity as  
Assistant Administrator,*  
NOAA Fisheries  
1315 East-West Highway  
Silver Spring, MD 20910,

NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES  
SERVICE,  
1315 East-West Highway  
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Defendants.

Case No.

**DECLARATION OF ERIC MESCHINO**

I, Eric Meschino, pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1746, do hereby state and declare as follows:

1. I am a resident of Plymouth, Massachusetts, and I am over 18 years of age.
2. I am a member of the Massachusetts Lobstermen Association, Inc. and also serve on its Board of Delegates.

3. I am also a lobster fisherman who fishes in the state and federal waters off the coast of Massachusetts.
4. Lobstering is my main source of income.
5. On or about January 31, 2023, I was notified that the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration would be creating a new emergency rule, effective February 1, 2023, that would prohibit lobster fishing in federal waters immediately outside of Massachusetts waters.
6. I was also made aware that the closure would be in effect from February 1, 2023, to April 30, 2023.
7. This portion, known as the “Wedge,” in 2023, had the following coordinates:

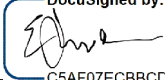
MRA Wedge Area Coordinates		
Point	Lat	Long
MRAW1	42°39.77'	70°30'
MRAW2	42°12'	70°38.69'
MRAW3	42°12'	70°30'
MRAW4	42°30'	70°30'
MRAW1	42°39.77'	70°30'

8. In or about January or February of 2023, I fished exclusively in the area encompassed by the Wedge.
9. Because I was notified of the 2023 Wedge Closure with less than fourteen (14) hours to comply and the number of traps that I had in the Wedge waters, I, and many other lobstermen and MLA members, did not have the practical ability to comply with the new Wedge closure rule.

10. The 2023 Wedge Closure harmed me financially and significantly disrupted my income.
11. The same will be true of this permanent Wedge Closure that is set to go into effect on March 8, 2024.
12. Should the Wedge be closed for the months of February, March, and April, I will lose a significant portion of my income.
13. I cannot afford such losses, and it would be a significant blow to my business if the Wedge closure is not lifted.
14. Should the ban on fishing in the Wedge be lifted, I would be able to continue to make a living through lobstering, and I would not be forced to close my business during that time.

FURTHER YOUR DECLARANT SAYETH NAUGHT.

I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct. Executed on this 9th day of February, 2024 in the City of Plymouth, Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

DocuSigned by:  
  
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Eric Meschino